CHAPTER 2

BASIC CONCEPTS OF WELFARE STATE, BUREAUCRACY AND CIVIL SERVICE NEUTRALITY

2.1: Concept of Welfare State

The modern welfare states developed during the late 19th and 20th century. The concept of ‘welfare state’ was first implemented practically by German Chancellor – Otto Von Bismarck. Examples of early welfare states in the modern world are Germany, all of the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Uruguay and New Zealand and the UK in the 1930s.

In the UK, the beginning of the modern welfare state was in 1911.

Now-a-days, the concept of the ‘Welfare State’ has become very popular and the concept of the ‘Police State’ is no longer valid these days. Burns opined that, there was unanimity amongst political thinkers that the State was obliged to make the life of its citizens complete, to protect their rights and help in developing their physical and mental outlook. Some of the leading definitions of Welfare State are discussed here, like, G.D.H. Cole says, Welfare State is a society in which an assured minimum standard of living and opportunity becomes the possession of every citizen. Hobson has very nicely summed up the increasing role of welfare state in the following words - the State has assumed the duties of a doctor, a nurse, a school-master, a trader and a manufacturer, an insurance agent, a house-builder, a town-planner, a railway controller and a hundred other functions. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru has defined the concept as – welfare state consists in providing equal opportunities to all, to wipe out the discrepancy between the rich and the poor, and raising the standard of living of the people.
There are two main interpretations of the concept of welfare states, like:

(a) A model in which the state assumes primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens. This responsibility ought to be comprehensive, because all aspects of welfare are considered and universally applied to citizens as a ‘right’.

(b) Welfare states can also mean the creation of a “social safety net” of minimum standards of varying forms of welfare.

It is to be noted here that the first chancellor of Germany, Otto Von Bismarck, created the modern welfare state for the first time that began as early as in the 1840s. Also, Esping-Anderson (1990) categorized three different types of welfare states in the book, ‘The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism’, which are as follows:

(i) The ideal social-democratic welfare state is based on the principle of universalism granting access to benefits and services based on citizenship. Such a welfare state is said to provide a relatively high degree of autonomy. Examples are Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

(ii) Christian-democratic welfare states are based on the principle of subsidiarity and the dominance of social insurance schemes, offering a medium level of decommodification and a high degree of social stratification. Examples are like, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain and Italy.

(iii) The liberal regime is based on the notion of market dominance and private provision; ideally, the state only interferes to ameliorate poverty
and provide for the basic needs. Examples are- Australia, Canada, Japan, Switzerland and US.

So far as the derivative meaning of welfare state is concerned, it is believed by Briggs that the English term ‘welfare state’ has been coined by Archbishop William Temple, during the 2nd World War, contrasting wartime Britain with the ‘Warfare State’ of Nazi Germany. Friedrich Hayek contends that the term has been derived from the older German word ‘Wohlfahrtsstaat’, which was used by the 19th century historians to describe a variant of the ideal of ‘polizeistaat’ (police state). It is to be noted here that the present day activities of welfare state is much more as compared to the then welfare states. The activities of present day welfare states extend to the provisions of both cash welfare benefits (such as old-age pensions or unemployment benefits) and also in-kind welfare schemes/services (such as health or child-care services).

Hasenfold, Rafferty and Zald (1987) in ‘The Welfare State, Citizenship and Bureaucratic Encounters’, stated that the growth of welfare state programs inevitably leads to an increase of citizen encounters with bureaucratic agencies. As conceptualized by Marshall, the rise of the welfare state was accompanied by the expansion of citizenship rights from civil and political to social. It is the exercise of these social rights that triggers the bureaucratic encounters. Although the term “Welfare State” is a loosely used term, it is possible to find out the general boundaries of the concept. Generally, it is seen that in the definition guiding most empirical research, the ‘Welfare State’ refers to the non-market, governmental provision of or direct funding of consumption needs in such areas as income, housing and health care. Core programmes are income programs for the elderly, medical care, unemployment subsidies and various forms of public assistance.
Heclo demarcates four periods of welfare State development. The experimentation stage extends from 1870-1920, the consolidation era dates from 1930-1950, the expansion era extends from 1950-1970, and the current epoch of reformulation began in 1970. Heclo’s periodization exercise serves as a very brief history of the development of the welfare state. Heclo sees civil servants as crucial actors in the enactment of social programmes (Hasenfold, Rafferty and Zald, 1987).

As social rights expanded to provide increased protection from poverty, illness and ignorance for broader segments of the population, so have the welfare state bureaucracies expanded. As institutional organizations, welfare state bureaucracies are structured to reflect and reaffirm the broad cultural, normative and symbolic justifications of the welfare state (Hasenfold, Rafferty and Zald, 1987).

Theories of Welfare State:- The Great Depression established the welfare state, but it was only after World War II that the social scientists began to turn their attention to it as a governmental institution. Since then, the theories of welfare state have proliferated. Four theories were identified: they include the liberal ideological consensus that lasted from World War II until the early 1970s and the Conservative, Moderate and left perspectives that emerged from the fragmentation of that consensus.

(a) The Ideological Consensus: The first and for many years, the dominant theory was the ideological consensus of the post-world war II period, which lasted until it disintegrated in the early 1970s. Drawing on the pluralistic conventions of American Political Science, this consensus believed in the existence of a beneficent state. It assumed that this state funded social programs for interest groups when it was objectively right to
do so. Several efforts were made to develop more elaborate conceptions of the welfare state’s role. Harold Wilensky and Charles Lebeaux’s ‘Industrial Society and Social Welfare’ (1965) is perhaps the most famous. The Ideological Consensus disintegrated in the early 1970s. Thereafter, three new theories arose in its place. These theories may plausibly be labeled the Conservative, Moderate and Radical views of the welfare state.

(b) The Conservative View: The economic slowdown galvanized the Conservative movement. Conservatives blamed economic stagnation on the size of the welfare state. Firmly rooted in modern conservative thought, this interpretation built on a conception of minimal government developed by Hayek and Freidman. Conservatives contended that an excess of social benefits had become a drag on capitalism’s natural productivity. Under these circumstances, it was no wonder that welfare clients had become dependent. As the social costs of a minimalist state have become more apparent in the late 1980s, the Conservative view of the welfare state has lost its power, and there are signs that we are approaching the threshold of a new conception that calls for increased public responsibility.

(c) The Moderate View: The economic slowdown invigorated the Conservative critique of the welfare state and weakened the position of many liberals. For these proponents of the ideological consensus, the appearance of fiscal constraints was especially disruptive. Without fiscal constraints in the 1960s, the welfare state grew in steady, measured steps; with fiscal constraints in the 1970s, it seemed to falter. In the moderates’ view, the appearance of these fiscal constraints showed that the limits of
the American welfare state had at last been reached. Harold Wilensky’s ‘The Welfare State and Equality’ exemplifies the first group of writings. Published in 1975, the book clearly illustrates the author’s change in outlook since his co-authorship of ‘Industrial Society and Social Welfare’ 10 years earlier.

(d) **The Radical View:** Since the early 1970s, theorists of the welfare state on the left have entertained an entirely different project. Instead of affirming the primacy of the private sector or seeking reconciliation with it, these theorists have tried to understand the role of the welfare state as it interacts with a market economy. The purpose of this theoretical exploration is to identify the limits placed on the welfare state so that those limits can be pushed back (Blau, 1989).

### 2.2: Concept of Bureaucracy

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Bureaucracy” is a body of professional, full-time officials employed in the civil affairs of a state in non-political capacity. It is a professional body of officials, permanently paid and skilled. It is a body of professional administrators as opposed to the amateur politicians, and is expected to play a pivotal role in the process of development. It is required that the civil servants must be impartially selected, they must be administratively competent, politically neutral and imbibed with the service to the community. Since the bureaucrats are ideally to be based on the concepts of rules and regulations, division of labour, hierarchy, rationality, neutrality etc., it is always expected to ensure smooth process of development.
The bureaucracy in India is an old institution, much older than all these which today dominate the political scene in the country. The Macaulay Report of 1854 legitimised the supremacy of the Indian Civil Service. The bureaucracy in India, thus, emerged in all its completeness by 1854 and today, the large-scale administrative transfers and even supersessions, which are usual occurrences now, have factionalised and politicised the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy can create bottlenecks in the economic and political development through red-tapism, heartless attitudes and narrowly conceived actions. A political system therefore needs an ideal efficient and workable bureaucracy to achieve political development (Maheshwari, 1978).

Medury (2010) in the book ‘Public Administration in the Globalisation Era’ has very well highlighted the impact of globalization in ushering in a major transformation in the role of welfare state and the related changes in the role of bureaucracy. The twenty-first century, under the impact of globalization has ushered in a major transformation in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres across the globe. As a result, the earlier concept of the welfare state is being overridden by a Corporatist State due to the influence of the market forces and it is also affecting the public administrative system as it is embedded in the state framework. Today there is a wide feeling across the globe that good governance relates to enhancing the quality of governance through empowerment, participation, accountability, equity and justice. In the absence of transparency and accountability, the development is not sustainable.

The diminished role of the State, a market-oriented economy supported by a democratic government with an efficient and quality-oriented public administration are considered to constitute the formula for both economic development and the well-being of the people. Privatization, deregulation, debureaucratisation and decentralization are the
core political issues. Performance-oriented governance and management strategies are advocated to improve responsiveness and accountability. Thus, no wonder that the concept of development management, which has gradually expanded to encompass bureaucratic re-orientation and restructuring, the integration of politics and culture into management improvement, participatory and performance-based service delivery programme management, community and non-governmental organisations’ capacity building and policy reform and implementation, is increasingly gaining ground especially in the context of developing countries (Medury, 2010).

Different Theories of Bureaucracy :-

The term ‘bureaucracy’ had an undisguisedly negative image even at the time of its origin. The word ‘bureaucracy’ was first coined by Vincent de Gournay (1712-59), a French economist. However, it was Max Weber (1864-1920), who for the first time founded the modern sociological study of bureaucracy and freed the term from its pejorative connotation and emphasized its indispensability for the rational attainment of the goals of an organization. Weber enunciated his views on bureaucracy in his celebrated “Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft”, later translated and published in English as “Economy and Society”. This book was published posthumously in 1921. To Karl Marx, bureaucracy carried a narrower meaning; it meant only the civil service, which is the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. But, Weber applied the concept much more broadly: bureaucracy applied to all forms of large organizations, such as the civil service, political parties, universities, and industrial enterprises. Weber believes in the inevitability of bureaucracy in a modern state and states that as society grows and economic life becomes more differentiated and complex, bureaucracy becomes all the more essential. Bureaucracy is symptomatic of the rationalization of the modern world
and is technically capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency. The Weberian model has the following characteristics:

1. Based on a positive view of bureaucracies.
2. Similar to a pyramid model.
3. Bureaucracies are based on a structured hierarchy and “chain of command”.
4. Those at the top of the hierarchy have broad and more general responsibilities.
5. Those at the bottom of the pyramid have more specific, detailed duties in making sure things get done.
6. Based on “standard operating procedures”, pre-set fixed routines.
7. Such standard procedures are designed to apply to all without discretion or bias.
8. Thus, bureaucracies are highly efficient, organized and equal to all.

At the hands of Weber, bureaucracy emerged as neutral, hierarchically organized, efficient and inevitable in contemporary society. Weber’s type was actually the ‘ideal type’ bureaucracy and the ideal type is never actualized.

Michel Crozier described his valuable concept about bureaucracy in ‘The Bureaucratic Phenomenon’. Also, Peter M. Blau authored ‘Bureaucracy in Modern Society’. However, the most far-reaching departure from Max Weber was made by F.W Riggs. His typology is based on the stage of development (or diffraction) of society. He perceived a pattern in the development reached by various societies and saw them falling into traditional, developing and modern systems. Further, each stage of development produced its own unique model of bureaucracy. The traditional,
developing and modern society, Riggs terms as ‘fused, prismatic and diffracted’. Further, each stage has its model of public administration or bureaucracy.

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<th>Type of society</th>
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<td>Fused</td>
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<td>Prismatic</td>
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<td>Diffracted</td>
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Bureaucracy of the prismatic society is termed as the ‘Sala’ model. Here, traditional and modern ideas co-exist and are in conflict. Decision making thus becomes difficult. Appointment of kith and kin and corruption are the hallmarks of the Sala bureaucracy. Price indeterminancy prevails in the market and a lot of bargaining takes place. Prices differ from one place to another (Maheshwari, 1998).

Moreover, in the seventies, the notion became popular that the government needed to be made more responsive to the citizens than it had been so far. ‘Public Choice Theory’ was forwarded, where it has been argued that the public agencies should compete to provide the citizens with services instead of acting as monopolies. Since the citizen is a consumer of government goods and services, administrative responsiveness to individual citizen’s demands would be increased by creating a market system for governmental activities. Here, I would like to highlight on three ‘Public Choice Theory’ perspectives on bureaucracy: - Gordon Tullock is generally recognized as having produced the first sustained public choice analysis in his 1965 book titled, ‘The Politics of Bureaucracy’. Shortly thereafter, Anthony Downs subjected the bureaucratic behavior to further scrutiny from a public choice standpoint in his book, ‘Inside Bureaucracy’, which appeared in 1967. In 1971, the public choice arguments about
behavior of the bureaucrats were drawn together and developed by William Niskanen in his book titled ‘Bureaucracy and Representative Government’. Since the 80s, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries have witnessed a widespread reform of their public bureaucracies induced by the prescriptions of public choice theory, and this has been pursued under the rubric of New Public Management (NPM), an expression coined by British observers to refer to a wholesale incorporation into the public domain of the core values identified with private sector that brought about a dramatic transformation of the traditional administrative practices. New Public Management (NPM), Managerialism, Market-based Public Administration or Reinventing Government are a few incarnations of a new model of public sector management which emerged in the beginning of the 1990s in response to the challenges of globalization, international competitiveness and technological change (Barthwal and Kishore, 2003).

Some other foreign scholars who had studied the bureaucracy in depth are like, Paul Appleby, Ralph Braibanti, La Palombara, Hugh Tinker, Urusula Hicks, David Potter etc. Some of the notable Indian scholars who have done researches on Bureaucracy and Development are – Kuldeep Mathur (Bureaucratic response to development, Bureaucracy and New Agricultural Strategy); C.P Bhamhri (Bureaucracy and Politics in India); R.B Jain and P.N Chaudhuri (Bureaucratic values in Development); G. More Gopal (Administrative leadership and Rural Development in India); H.R Chaturvedi (Bureaucracy and local Community Dynamics of Rural Development); A. Avasthi and Ramesh Arora (Bureaucracy and Development: Indian Perspectives); P.R Dubhashi (Rural Development Administration of India); S.R Maheshwari (Rural Development in India) etc.
Owing to its large size and importance, bureaucracy has now been regarded as an organized sub-system of the total societal system. It has got a more crucial role to play in the developing countries. Everywhere, it has been granted a legal status, adequate powers and an aura of legitimacy. C.N. Bhalerao has discovered four main characteristics of the emerging bureaucratic culture in India:— (i) an impersonal way of operation, rigidly adhering to formal rules, precedents and procedures; (ii) an all-pervasive sense of in-security and frustration among the officials; (iii) closed nature of the system lacking in change orientation and constructive internal communication or communication with outside groups, and, (iv) lack of initiative, responsibility, challenge and innovation (Verma, 1978).

With rampant corruption and sharp deterioration in the standards of public morality, it is not surprising that India is now categorized as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Recently, this was reaffirmed in a statistical index drawn up by a German non-governmental organization, Transparency International, which measured perceptions of corruption in 41 countries. The survey placed India among the seven most corrupt countries. In such an alarming situation, it is but natural that the role of civil servants come under increasingly closer scrutiny. It is to be noted here that corruption has permeated the administration at all levels in the local self-government institutions, state governments and the centre. Ideally, the civil servants should represent the highest standards of efficiency, public service, integrity and political neutrality. It should enjoy freedom to give objective, dispassionate and frank advice. The political executive should clearly indicate in writing the reasons for disregarding the advice tendered to him. The civil servants should not be allowed to hide behind oral orders, there should be no direct or indirect pressure exerted on a civil servant. These
ground rules are no doubt sensible and easy to understand. But, in recent years, these rules are being increasingly ignored, as a result of which, the civil service is in turmoil. The civil service has gone through a number of upheavals over the years. It is because, over the years, a concept which caused havoc in the civil service was the concept of “committed civil service” which was propagated by the then ruling Congress(I) party in the early 1970s. This concept drew serious criticisms as it questioned the very percept of political neutrality on which the edifice of the civil service is built. “Be committed or get omitted” became the slogan. Thus, an era of politically-pliable and flexible civil service was ushered in. This was clearly a turning point in the post-independence history of the civil service. However, in the recent years, a number of issues concerning the problems and challenges of the civil servants have come to the fore. The then Prime Minister Morarji Desai had written to all the chief ministers in 1977 expressing his concern on the subject and urged:-“If officers are to be responsible for producing results, particularly in the developmental sectors, they must have a measure of continuity in their jobs. Over the years, a tendency to transfer the officers on comparatively minor issues has developed and this has led to short tenures for incumbents of important jobs. Frequent transfers, particularly of secretaries, heads of departments, district magistrates, and other district level officers only create a feeling of demoralization and diffidence amongst them, and inhibit initiative and creative effort.” A related matter of concern is the indiscriminate use of the power of suspension by the state governments. In the recent years, these powers have been grossly misused, leading to demoralization and resentment. The problem has become more acute in the North East because the creation of small, unviable, full-fledged States in the NE has created serious problems in the governance of the area (Godbole, 1997).
Tyagi (1958) in ‘Role of Civil Service in India’ has highlighted aptly as to how the role of bureaucrats differ today from that of the earlier days. Earlier the main objectives of the administration were maintenance of law and order, which meant that our administration was largely a police and judicial system for the protection of life and property. The principal agency for the performance of these activities was the Indian Civil Service, which was a centralized and neatly-integrated hierarchy of permanent officials. Its functions were mainly regulatory which did not call for any technical skill or inventive and enterprising minds. All its activities were tied down in accordance with rules and regulations and the civil servants had to simply follow the rules and precedents in deciding all issues that came before them. But, after independence, there was a far-reaching change in the political atmosphere, which has completely transformed the character and role of our civil service. In a parliamentary democracy as ours, a civil servant has two roles to play. In the first place, he is an expert advisor to the minister, and, in the second, manager of his administrative unit. Defining the advisory role of the civil service, Sir Warren Fisher, sometimes permanent secretary to the British Treasury, has said, “Determination of policy is the function of ministers, and once a policy is determined, it is the unquestioned and unquestionable business of the civil servant to strive to carry out that policy with precisely the same energy and precisely the same good will whether he agrees with it or not. That is axiomatic and will never be in dispute. At the same time, it is the traditional duty of civil servants, while decisions are being formulated, to make available to their political chiefs all the information and experience at their disposal, and to do this without fear or favour, irrespective of whether the advice thus tendered may accord or not with the minister’s initial view.” (Tomlin Commission Report, Evidence Vol. pg. 126).The proper
discharge of this duty on the part of the civil servant requires qualities of a highly moral order, such as presentation of integrity, fearlessness and independence of thought and utterance. Actually, fullest co-operation and accord between the two branches of government is required for proper functioning of the government. But, unfortunately, at times it is seen that the ministers, on their part, fail to understand as to where their sphere of activity ended and that of the civil service began. They, in their desire for getting the policy programme executed to its fullest extent, interfere in the day-to-day administration. There had already developed in the civil service a tendency for shirking the responsibility and for pushing up the level of decision-making higher up. Our government, since independence, has adopted the policy of socialistic pattern of society in place of the laissez faire principle. This means the change from a police state to a social service state, under which the state assumes the responsibility for securing to every citizen of an important body of his fundamental needs. In such a dynamic state, the civil servant’s role also has become more creative than sedative, more positive than negative, as suggested by Prof. Burnham as the “managerial role” (Tyagi, 1958).

In “The Transfer Raj: Indian Civil Servants on the move”, Banik (2001) highlighted that the officers belonging to the elite Indian administrative service (IAS) are subject to rapid and often arbitrary transfers from their posts throughout their careers. Rapid transfers of the officers is one important factor that demoralizes the key civil servants. How and why officials are rapidly transferred from one post to another has important consequences for administrative leadership and programme implementation. Although the phenomenon is widespread, the rate and volume of transfers varies between Indian States. However, the crucial determinant seems to be the political culture and the nature of the political leadership in place.
Media in India are praising the “landmark” Supreme Court order that aims to free the Country’s bureaucracy from political interference. The Court actually ordered the federal and state governments to set up a special board that will look after transfers, promotions and disciplinary matters involving civil servants. The court said that all orders given to the civil servants must be in writing “to protect them against wrongful and arbitrary pressure exerted by the administrative superiors, political executive, business and other vested interests”, reports the DNA Website. The NDTV Website says the Court’s order will ensure that the civil servants will not have “to take verbal orders from their political bosses” and it will “insulate the bureaucracy from victimization”. The Hindustan Times Website says, “Bureaucrats are often transferred on the whims and fancies of politicians and the Court indicated as much when it said deteriorating standards of probity and accountability in bureaucracy were due to political influence.” <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-24768239>.

India has adopted the ideal of welfare state from that of Britain. However, the idea that the State should act as an agency of human welfare is nothing new. Aristotle very clearly asserted that the State came into existence to make life possible but continues for the sake of good life. In the ‘Shanti Parva’ of Mahabharata, the same thing has been stated when it says, ‘the State should ceaselessly foster righteousness, guide, correct and control the moral life of the people, make the earth habitable and comfortable for men.’ However, the phrase is a recent coinage and the emphasis has shifted from the State being regarded as the agency of moral welfare to its now being regarded as the instrument of economic welfare. This is evident from the various definitions of welfare State as given by different writers. Dr. Abraham defines it as a community where State power is deliberately used to modify the normal play of economic forces so as to obtain
a more equal distribution of income for every citizen, a basic minimum real income irrespective of the market value of his work and of his property. According to Kent, “it is a State that provides for its citizens a wide range of social services. The primary purpose is to give the citizen security. The estate undertakes to help him if he loses his ordinary source of income”. Thus, it is clear that the Police State gradually moved towards a Welfare State now-a-days. It has been realized today that Mill’s distinction between ‘self-regarding actions’ and ‘others-regarding actions’ are no more tenable because there could hardly be any individual act which has absolutely no social bearing (Ghosh, 1954).

2.3: Concept of Civil Service Neutrality

Sardar Patel had made the following observations in the Constituent Assembly to support the continuance of the pre-independence civil service structure: - “It needs hardly to be emphasized that an efficient, disciplined and contended civil service assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work, is a sine-qua-non of sound administration under democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule. The service must be above party and we should ensure that political considerations, either in its recruitment or in its discipline and control are reduced to the minimum if not eliminated altogether.” However, it is to be noted that this vision of civil service neutrality no longer holds good. Changes in governments, particularly at the state level often lead to wholesale transfer of the civil servants. Political neutrality is no longer the accepted norm with many civil servants, getting identified rightly or wrongly with a particular political dispensation. It has rightly been stated that the political neutrality and impartiality of the civil servants needs to be preserved and the onus for this lies equally on the political executive and the civil servants. Again, as
observed by Paul Appleby, civil servants should not confuse ‘political neutrality’ with ‘programme neutrality’. At the stage of policy formulation, the role of the civil servants is to render free and frank advice which should not be coloured by any political considerations. But once a policy or programme has been approved by the elected government, it is the duty of the civil servants to faithfully and enthusiastically see to its implementation.

The concept of neutrality has 3 implications:

(1) Public confidence in the non-political character of public service;

(2) Confidence of ministers belonging to any political party in the loyalty of the permanent subordinates, and,

(3) High morale of public servants based on the confidence that promoting would be made not on the basis of political considerations but on merit.

Neutrality means political impartiality or non-political nature of the civil service. It implies that civil servants should remain non-political and must serve different governments in power impartially. They should tender free and frank advice to the political executives without any political consideration. They should be objective, dispassionate, apolitical and non-partisan band of professional administrators doing their job with efficiency, integrity, loyalty, proficiency and dedication. In the words of Mohit Bhattacharya, Neutrality meant a kind of political sterilization, the bureaucracy remaining unaffected by the changes in the flow of politics……There might be changes in political leadership, but the civil servants would be unfailingly offering
“technical” advice to the political master keeping himself aloof from the “politics” of the day. Again, in the words of R.B Jain, Political neutrality not only meant the absence of political activity or bias on the part of individual member of the bureaucracy but also that the bureaucracy would respond to the will of the government, no matter what its political complexion be (Laxmikanth, 2011).

Mohapatra (1965) in ‘The Doctrine of Civil Services Neutrality under Democratic Socialism in India’, has highlighted that the doctrine of the political sterilization of civil servants is primarily the product of the British Parliamentary Democracy, which envisages a harmonious co-ordination between the amateurism in politics and the realistic vision of Administration. Political sterilization of the civil servant was considered imperative, if his loyalty to the political chief was to be relied upon. The concept of civil service neutrality has been very nicely analysed by the Hoover Commission which stated, “They should keep clean of all political activity, preserve their neutrality in matters of policies……….senior civil servants would necessarily refrain from all political activities that would adversely affect their ability to perform their official duties fairly or that would tend to identify them personally with a political party or its policies…..The senior civil servant should make no public or private statements to the press except of a purely formal nature. He should make no public speech of a political or controversial character.” (Hoover Commission, pg. 38-40). The traditional doctrine of civil services neutrality has to confront several difficulties, when examined in the context of a democratic socialist order. It is because when the goals of democratic socialism are to be implemented, then the task of the civil service becomes a gigantic one. Civil service in a democratic socialist order ceases to be merely a policeman or merely a steel-frame upholding the legal structure. Outlining the ‘role of
civil service in our democracy’, G.B. Pant once observed – “The new tasks of the civil servants are therefore all comprehensive and include planning, control and guidance of entire economic as well as social activities…….”(Extract from Radio talk delivered on 18th Aug., 1955). In concrete terms, a civil servant in a democratic socialism becomes a missionary endowed with the twin task of “development” and “democratization”.

Under a true democratic socialist order like ours, the myth of ‘Politics-administration dichotomy’ has come to be exploded. This myth was actually popular in the USA when Woodrow Wilson published his essay in 1887 and thereafter attempts were made there to rescue their administrative system from the evils of “Spoils System”. Moreover, a developing country like ours suffer from a hoax of problems like illiteracy, ignorance etc and it is the rank and file of civil service which must provide the requisite knowledge, experience and initiative for the formulation of policies. Once this is admitted, it becomes rather uncomfortable to accept the traditional theory of politics-administration dichotomy which forms the basis of the doctrine of civil service neutrality (Mohapatra, 1965).

The concept of Civil Service Neutrality has been discussed at length in the book ‘A Dictionary of Public Administration’ by S.R Maheshwari (2011). It is true that neutrality is a hallmark of the civil service in India as in the UK. Civil servants enjoy permanence of tenure. But, the ministers whom they necessarily serve are birds of passage with no fixity of term. They come and go but the civil servants under them continue until they superannuate. Government servants are required to serve whoever occupies the minister’s office. This, they can do only when they enjoy the trust and confidence of the ministers. The civil servants not only implement the policies and decisions made by the political executive, but they also advise the latter on policy-
making. This role they can perform only when they observe complete neutrality in regard to political matters.

Rai, Singh and Gour (1978) in ‘Neutrality v/s Commitment : A Futile Debate’ deals with the concepts of civil service neutrality and commitment. It has been stated that in the opening paragraph of its “Report on Personnel Administration”, the Administrative Reforms Commission states :- “Society depends, for its progress and well being, on the effective functioning of government and government, whatever its type – democratic or otherwise – will, in the last analysis, be as good as what its personnel make of it. A theoretically perfect administrative structure and unexceptionable methods of work may be devised, but they will be of little or no avail if those who man the administration are either unequal to their task or are apathetic towards it.” The notion of neutrality has variously been defined by the scholars from different continents. Thus, according to F.M. Marx, “Administrative neutrality means acceptance of the discipline of working without reservation – indeed, with devotion – for the success of every government lawfully in power. Conversely, it carries with it a prohibition…….”. However, in the present context, the bureaucracy has to be imbued with an ideology of radical socio-economic transformation. Therefore, total neutrality in our situation is not possible, an ideology that is fatal and suicidal. It has to be replaced by an ideology of commitment.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear that now-a-days, what is expected from the civil servants is that they should be committed to the Constitutional norms rather than party in power. That is actually the meaning of civil service neutrality in the present context.
Political Neutrality is the hall-mark of our civil service. A Civil Servant is precluded from indulging in activities of a political nature and canvassing for political support on behalf of any political party. He has a right to vote but he must exercise it silently. His political beliefs are his private concern, and no one else need-indeed, should know about them. He is under an obligation to serve whichever political party is in power. This is what is meant by the term ‘Political Neutrality’. The term ‘political neutrality’ is not entirely without ambiguity; it degenerates into a drag and a stumbling block when given an over-stretched or broader meaning. Neutrality does not mean absence of emotional involvement, so vital for the completion of complex tasks. It does not imply indifference towards action in hand or passivity of mind. It does not suggest inertia, it does not connote soullessness in the implementation of policies. It does not convey an absence of dynamism, zeal, enthusiasm, push and drive. Above all, it also does not postulate a lack of commitment to the basic philosophy and injunctions of the Country’s Constitution. The concept of ‘neutrality’ of the civil service must not be invoked to cover or justify non-performance, poor performance or shoddy performance of tasks (Maheshwari, 1970).

It is generally stated that the civil servant must adopt an attitude of impartiality toward the conflicting philosophies of government, espoused by the various political parties. This attitude has actually been termed as the doctrine of the neutrality of the public service. Two propositions must be satisfied so that the civil servants can be regarded as politically neutral. These are like:- firstly, that the public servant must abstain from any participation in the affairs of political parties while retaining the right of private discussion of political issues and of voting as he pleases; and, secondly, that he is
ethically and morally bound to administer the policy decisions of whichever party happens to be in power with equal zeal and determination (Levitan, 1942).

Also, in ‘Civil Servants and Politicians’, Dr. S. Saraswathi (2013), former Director, ICSSR, New Delhi, highlights on this concept of neutrality. It has been stated that the suspension of Durga Shakti Nagpal of U.P and of Ashok Khemka of Haryana – these two cases have brought into limelight several other cases of suspected victimization of civil servants by their political bosses for reasons supposed to be not any administrative wrongdoing. Various reports reveal the variety and frequency of punishments meted out to the civil servants in different states in the form of frequent transfers and demotion in posts. Such “punishment postings” as they are dubbed are forms of coercion and harassment of the civil servants. It has been correctly stated here that for running the business of the government, four wings are actually involved :- a legislature to make laws as expressed by the elected members, an executive to implement the will of the people expressed in Parliament, a judiciary to interpret and review the laws and its implementation and a Civil Service to operationalise the will of the executive in the day-to-day business.

The civil servants are mainly concerned with purely civil and non-technical affairs of the state, whose responsibility is to administer the law of the land in letter and spirit. Finer has succinctly described Civil Servants as a body of officials, permanent and skilled. Selected impartially through a tough competitive test, trained for administrative competence, given orientation to be politically neutral and non-partisan in dealing with people, and expected to evince a spirit of service to the community in functioning, civil service constitute the most vital pillar of good governance. They have to remain committed to the law of the land under all circumstances.
The concept of neutrality and impartiality in public office regardless of the person and party in power is central to the British Civil Service system adopted in India. Unfortunately, some of the recent horrifying incidents made it sound like simply coercing civil service to be meekly obedient to the executive. However, tampering with independence and neutrality of civil service will seriously undermine the very object of a civil service. Political interference in the bureaucratic administration will exactly do this unless we infuse and enforce healthy norms to govern executive-bureaucracy relation. Sometimes again, executive-bureaucracy differences marred smooth functioning of the government. Now-a-days, many of the civil servants often nurse a grievance that they are made servants of their political masters and unable to discharge their duties as prescribed by the rules and regulations and adhere to the code of conduct expected of them.

The report of the ARC (1968), listing a number of recommendations to promote good governance has mentioned that “ministers should not interfere in the day-to-day administration except in cases of grave injustice, serious defaulter or maladministration on the part of civil servants.” The report describes the official relationship between secretaries and ministers as one based on principles of loyalty and confidence. But unfortunately, it is the age of corruption and nepotism and the chances of the civil servants falling in the trap and losing the principles of neutrality and rule of law are growing strong. Thus, it is all the more urgent to keep the civil servants insulated from the wave of politicization <http://www.infa.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2706&Itemid=40>.
One of the foundational pillars of an effective, competent and corruption free civil service is for it to be neutral and fearless in its approach and faithful to the Constitution, while carrying out their duties and not soliciting for patronage from any party for vested interests. The founding fathers of the Constitution wisely provided, by making provisions in Part XIV of the Constitution for apolitical and independent civil services, with requisite protection for service matters that pertain to both the Union and the States. But unfortunately, political interference and administrative acquiescence has severely dented the professional fibre of the service, reason being civil servants being in fear of regular transfers, if not giving into the political masters and the politicians not allowing these civil servants to do their jobs due to their vested interests and initiate unnecessary disciplinary actions and transfers and using them as a tool against honest and upright civil servants who do not bow down to their unholy demands. Still, the solution to this rests upon the public servants shoulders more. Civil servants have to bring a new orientation to rules by which the everyday conduct of public affairs has to be regulated. The civil servants should remain upright with full integrity and perform their duties even if it means a transfer. And if wrongly charged, then approach the grievance redressal mechanisms (legal as well as Constitutional) and Courts in the proper protocol and fight against the injustice, because in the end the truth alone will triumph. The doctrine of neutrality is based upon the assumption that the same set of civil servants can function under governments that are committed to different political philosophies. Neutrality in practice is non-partisanship and impartiality in the sense that when the civil servants are executing a corpus of statutory laws and regulations, they
shall act impartially and will not import political considerations into their operations. But, it is to be borne in mind that a significant development in the realm of public administration has taken place during the present century: the myth of politics-administration dichotomy has been exploded. Theoretically, it is possible to treat the administrative and political tasks as two distinct and distinguishable functions. But, in practice, in recent years the trend is to move away from such a dichotomy. Bureaucrats have become increasingly involved in politics so far as politics relates to the process of policy-making. In developing countries, in particular, the extent of bureaucrats’ involvement in politics is exceptionally high. In fact, the distinction formally made between policy-making and policy-implementation – the latter being the primary responsibility of bureaucracy – is subtle and naïve. This distinction does not seem to exist so vividly in the developing societies so as to be identifiable in every situation because the processes of decision-making and decision-implementation are intricately intertwined (Parashar, 2003).

Neutrality, the distinguishing mark of the civil servants, does not actually mean apathy or indifference towards programmes under implementation. A civil servant must be committed to the Constitution and its philosophy and values. He must have programmatic commitment. Neutrality means that a civil servant must not have any explicit political alignment: he must not identify himself with political parties and their factions and groups, he must not personalize his relationships. A civil servant would observe neutrality if he was confident that his legitimate career interests would remain protected and would not be subject to political manipulation. However, unfortunately this culture has not survived in independent India for a long time. Today, the sad fact is that the civil servants by and large have ceased to be professional. They give advice to
their political masters which the latter would like to hear in the hope of getting favours and are duly rewarded also. Civil service postings are one of the game of musical chairs. As a result, the competent officers are side-lined; supersessions are common; politicization of the civil servants is more marked as one goes down the governmental ladder. The situation is really distressing at the state level. Thus, the need of the hour is to ensure impartiality, objectivity and integrity in the civil service; these three prime virtues are facing extinction in the India of today (Maheshwari, 2011).

The Constitutional protection accorded to the civil service has proved to be of no avail, and today it is prepared to go to any lengths to accommodate the political bosses. What is more is that while the politician may want the civil servant to bend, he is prepared even to crawl. The political boss has been able to make the civil servants toe the line because of his power which enables him to effect transfers, withhold promotions and carry out suspensions. Postings and transfers are the normal processes in the personnel administration and no one should ordinarily criticize them: they actually broaden the horizon and provide a variety of experiences. Thus, these are an integral part of the career service. But, the problem is that these processes are often used vindictively – for punishment or for reward. By controlling postings and transfers, the politicians can make the civil servants subservient. A minister these days prefers a civil servant who is prepared to carry out his commands regardless of the moral consideration (Maheshwari, 2011).

In the article, ‘Minister-Secretary relations –II: Getting the best of ministers’, it has been stated by B.S Raghavan that if the minister’s order is blatantly irregular, illegal or liable to be construed as a criminal offence, the civil servants should immediately blow the whistle and refuse to comply. To make this possible, the civil servants must get
security. A good part of the present malaise of the body politic can be traced to the degeneration in the mettle of the administrative class, both at the centre and in the states. The process is not irreversible. It will certainly be possible to infuse the administration with dynamism and vitality once the sanctity of the fundamentals of good governance is upheld by administrators and politicians alike

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